INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

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APPLICATION PROCESS SESSION

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WEDNESDAY

MAY 28, 2008

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Slide One:

Dr. ALBRO: Good afternoon. All right. This is Liz Albro. I want to thank you all for joining us for the third group of webinars that we're putting out.

This particular session is going to focus on the application process and we're going to try and walk -- walk you all through some of the nitty-gritty details that you'll need to attend to as you prepare your application for submission to the Institute.

I hope that all of you have your slides. The way this is going to work is I'm going to ask that each of you on the phone remain muted during the call.

If you have questions that occur to you, please feel free to use your chat box and send those questions in and I will pause at various points when it makes sense to do so and answer the questions sort of all together.

So, I'm going to walk through these slides and I hope they're helpful.

Slide Two:

What we're going to do today is we're going to walk through these various components of putting the application together.

I'm going to first cover what it is -- where you can find the application materials. Then I'm going to share with you a little bit of the general program information.

I'm sure that many of you are already aware of the content of the application, what needs to go in it in terms of making decisions about programs and Goals. And I think that many of you have either heard the webinars before or I hope that some of you have been in touch with our program staff.

So, I'm not going to focus on that today. I'm going spend most of my time looking at the Grants.gov (website), what needs to go into the application itself, things like page limits, formats, and then we'll talk about final reminders.

Slide Three:

So, first things first: Where do you find the application materials?

Slide Four:

For IES we have a two-step process. First, if you want to find our Request for Applications, those are available on the Institute of Education Sciences website, ies.ed.gov/funding.

And if you go to that website you can pull down all of our RFAs (Requests for Applications) across both the National Center for Education Research (NCER) and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER).

If there are individuals on the phone who are thinking about potentially coming in, not for fiscal 2009, but for some time in the future, I would recommend that you sign up for our NewsFlash on ies.ed.gov/newsflash, where you'll get announcements as to when new RFAs are released or if there are any changes in the contents of the RFAs, as well as information about new awards that are made and things like that.

Slide Five:

So, if you go to our ies.ed.gov/funding page, this is our funding opportunities page; you will see a page that should look a lot like this. And, as you'll note, there are quite a few Requests for Applications that are currently available.

The first set, there are five of those green bars that you can see in front of you. Those first five are the National Center for Education Research Request for Applications. And then the Special Education Center's (National Center for Special Education Research) RFAs are the two that follow.

Please notice that there is also a note regarding the sub-awards. We'll talk a little bit today about what that is. There are also unsolicited grant opportunities that are described there as well as the Statewide Longitudinal Data System grants.

Slide Six:

If you are to click on those arrows on any of those green bars, you will then find additional information embedded underneath those bars.

So, I just wanted to make sure that everybody is aware of the fact that the deadlines relevant to each of the RFAs as well as the topic areas for the RFAs for which that is appropriate, are listed underneath each of those bars.

Slide Seven:

Now, the critical thing that you need to know is it's not enough to simply download the Request for Applications. You need to also get the application packages that are available on grants.gov.

This information is, of course, the critical information because that's what you'll need to upload in order to officially submit to our fiscal 2009 competitions.

Slide Eight:

For those of you who have not been to the grants.gov website, here's what it looks like. So, I'm assuming that most of you on the phone are already familiar or will soon become very familiar with this website.

Slide Nine:

So, you'll go to grants.gov and then, in order to get to the correct application package, there are several steps that you'll need to follow.

First is you'll need to search by CFDA number. Don't add the letter. You'll notice that most of our RFAs have five numbers followed by a letter. Do not add the letter onto your search.

If you're looking for the National Center for Education Research grants, simply put in 84.305. For NCSER, simply put in 84.324.

Slide Ten:

If you do that into the search button, what you will find or what you will get is a website or a Web search page that looks like this.

So, this is if you put in 84.305. And you'll notice that you get a list of application packages. You'll need to select the appropriate application package for the competition that you're intending to apply to.

I want you all to note that there are close dates, due dates that are there on the left-hand side, so if you are planning to put in a proposal for the Education Research, 84.305A for the June deadline, you'll want to click on that.

First: Opportunity Title there, and you'll notice that it has an A-1 suffix at the end of the number. That's how you'll know you have the correct application package.

You'll notice that the only other Request for Applications that has a deadline in June is the Education Research on Statistical and Research Methodology in Education. All of the other Requests for Applications and packages that are up there have deadlines of October 2nd.

All right. So, you'll need to look for the title that matches, as well as the date. So, that's the first thing you need to do.

Slide Eleven:

Then, once you click on the title of the RFA that you're interested in applying to, you need to download the application package that's designated for your competition and deadline.

Slide Twelve:

So, once you click on Education Research CFDA 84.305A-1 you will come to a page that looks like this. You can check on that page information as to when the document is due, so you'll notice that the closing date for the application is there. It says June 26th, 2008. It told you the date that the application was available.

And then, to download the application, you need to go to that button there on the right-hand side and you need to download it from there.

Slide Thirteen:

All right. Here's what the next page looks like. You click on that application and notice that it will give you your CFDA number, but without the letter. It will give you the competition number.

And for those of you who want to know how to read that, the CFDA number is first, so it's 84-305A. Then you have the fiscal year. It's 2009, and it's -1 for the first round.

Our title's Education Research for this RFA, and then you can download all the instructions in the application where I've circled it with that red box.

Slide Fourteen:

So, be persistent. I think that would be the thing to notice there.

Slide Fifteen:

Some general program information, before we get into some of the nitty-gritties.

Slide Sixteen:

People always want to know how many awards are available. I think it's important to recognize that the number of awards that we make does depend upon the availability of funds, of course.

It also depends upon the quality of applications that we receive. So, we do not have a fixed dollar amount or a fixed number of applications that we are required to spend on any of our research RFAs or our topics.

And again, the size of the award depends on scope of the projects that were proposed -- that are proposed.

Slide Seventeen:

Who's eligible to apply? In the Request for Applications it states that applicants must have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically valid research. These requirements hold for the research Request for Applications.

Please note that for the training grants there is a requirement that you be an institution who can provide training both for the Pre- and the Postdoctoral Training Grants, and for the State and Local Evaluation Request for Applications, there are some additional eligibility requirements as well.

For those of you who are used to working or applying to the Department of Education, please note that cost-sharing or matching is not required.

Slide Eighteen:

Just to restate, if you didn't catch it in the earlier slide: what are the due dates? For both the education and special education research competitions there are two dates for this fiscal year, June 26th, 2008 and October 2nd, 2008.

For the Statistical and Research Methodology in Education competition there is a June 26th deadline as well. For all remaining RFAs that are currently posted, applications are due October 2nd, 2008.

Slide Nineteen:

So, more about grants.gov.

Slide Twenty:

The first thing to know is to start early. I think I've said this on every call that I've had so far, and I'm going to restate it again.

Please know that initial registration, if you or your institution is not already registered on grants.gov, initial registration may take five or more business days to complete.

The annual update, if you've already been in grants.gov and you're going to update your registration information, even that may take more than three days to complete.

I just saw a question flash across my screen here, which says, "Are the Requests for Applications identical for the two due dates?" The answer is yes. The requirements are the same, and the topics are the same across both due dates.

Slide Twenty-one:

There are some software compatibility requirements with grants.gov that you need to be aware of before you try to upload your application. The first is to know that the application package uses grants.gov PureEdge forms.

This means that you'll need to download that PureEdge software if you do not already have that on your computer. The second, for those of you who have downloaded Microsoft Vista or Word 2007 onto your machines, grants.gov does not support files that are saved in 2007 or Vista format.

That means that you either need to use an earlier version of Word to prepare your application or you need to save the file with a .doc file extension instead of a .doc/x file extension.

In addition, for Mac users, if you do not have a Windows operating system you will need to use the Citrix solution. These sorts if technical details are things you will need to confer with the grants.gov technical assistance line, but just as a head's up for those of you who are thinking about working with grants.gov and putting in a proposal for the first time.

Slide Twenty-two:

All right. We have a requirement which is that all of our applications must be submitted electronically and they must be submitted using grants.gov. E-mailing an electronic copy of your grant proposal does not count as submitting a proposal to the competition.

So, do not e-mail an electronic copy of the grants to your project officer and think that means that you have successfully applied to the competition. You must go through the grants.gov portal.

Slide Twenty-three:

Another important thing to know about the grants.gov submission process is that your application, when it is received by grants.gov, it will be both date- and time-stamped.

The other critical piece about that is that we have a firm and fixed deadline, which is that it must be uploaded, submitted, date- and time-stamped no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, D.C. time on the application date.

If it comes in at 4:32 it will be returned to you as a late application. And please know that late applications will not be considered.

It's one of the worst things for a program officer to have to do is to tell an applicant that, "I'm sorry, your application was received two minutes too late and it will not be able to be considered during this review cycle." So, please, start early and don't wait until the last day to upload.

Slide Twenty-four:

Okay. I'm going to restate this again. Electronic submission is required unless you qualify for one of the following exceptions:

If, for some reason you or your institution does not have access to the internet or you or your system does not have the capacity to upload large documents to the grants.gov system.

Slide Twenty-five:

If you qualify for a grants.gov submission exception, you must submit a written statement that you qualify no later than 2 weeks before the application deadline, and you can follow the directions in the application package.

I have a question here about the Word problem. It says, "In grants.gov, shouldn't you upload a PDF document rather than a Word document, and wouldn't this eliminate any .doc/x. file format issues?"

That is true, that it would do so. I believe that grants.gov offers a Word upload function for folks who do not have Adobe or PDF Adobe-maker or PDF-Pagemaker, whatever the program is, so they have the Word option for individuals who don't have access to that technology. But, yes, if you upload it as a PDF, then it's not an issue.

Another thing, another note that I've gotten here is that the system gets pretty clogged up. It's starting about an hour before the deadline. I want to encourage as many people as possible to not wait until an hour before the deadline.

I really think that the best thing to do is to try to upload your proposal at least 24 hours, if not 48 hours before the deadlines of the proposal. I know that's sometimes hard, but I want to encourage you all to work toward that goal.

There's a question here which says, "When will IES move to the Adobe Viewer rather than the PureEdge Viewer? grants.gov has already begun switching to Adobe for some competitions." I actually don't have an answer to that question and I'm not involved in the decisionmaking process.

Along that, I'm sure that as soon as grants.gov gives us the okay to move that way, we will do so. It probably also has to do with compatibility with the Department system in terms of getting the application information into the Department of Education's system.

All right. Let's continue on. Keep sending the questions and I'll keep trying to answer them to the best of my ability.

So, for those of you who think you might qualify for an exception, a reminder: you have to submit a written statement that you qualify, no later than 2 weeks before the application deadline and follow the directions in the application package.

However, I would encourage all of you who now know that electronic submission is required to do your best to meet those requirements.

Slide Twenty-six:

Okay. If you encounter problems with submitting and uploading your application, contact the grants.gov support desk. Here is their 800 number. It is 1-(800) 518-4726.

Make sure that when you contact the support desk, you get a case number so that you have that number handy and that you can have a record of it moving forward.

At the same time we also request that you contact the program officer and provide an explanation of the technical problem so that we are aware if you're having a particular problem or perhaps there's a larger problem that we need to be aware of.

Slide Twenty-seven:

For grants.gov submission problems and extensions, the only exception that we will make is that we will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical

problem occurred on our end with the grants.gov system, and that the problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on the application deadline date.

So, unfortunately, if technical problems occur on your end that is not considered an exception that we can grant. It has to be a problem on the receiving end.

Slide Twenty-eight:
Within 2 days, again, so that is my 48-hour plea to put in things as early as you can. Within 2 days, you will receive two different e-mails from grants.gov.

The first e-mail that you will receive will confirm the receipt of the application and provide you with a tracking number. The second e-mail will indicate that your application has been validated by the system prior to transmission to the U.S. Department of Education or rejected, due to errors within the package that was uploaded.

Slide Twenty-nine:
So, once the submission has been confirmed, then the application will come from the grants.gov portal into the U.S. Department of Education's grant system.

You will receive another e-mail that includes your PR/award number that is unique to your application. It is that number that you should use for any communication that you have with the program staff here at IES. That will help us track down your proposal.

If your application is late, right, if it gets that time stamp that's 4:32, you will receive an e-mail indicating that it was late and will not be given further consideration.

Slides Thirty and Thirty-one:
So, what goes in the application? The Standard Form 424, the cover sheet. A one-page abstract, a 25-page project narrative, appendix A, which can be up to 15 pages long, which should include letters of agreement from participating schools or districts, or if you're using -- getting information from a data set, any permission letters that you need to have that say you have access to the data.

Tables and figures can go in appendix A, as can up to three pages can be used to provide responses to prior reviewer feedback, if it's a resubmission.

For appendix B, in appendix B you can have up to 10 pages, and in that you can include materials that describe the intervention. So examples of the curriculum material, examples of the assessment, if you're developing something that's technology-driven, maybe some screen shots of some prototype work that you might have already done.

The application should also include bibliography and the references cited and/or references cited, I guess.

Slide Thirty-two:
It should include biographical sketches of key personnel. It should include a narrative budget justification. It should include sub-award budget or budgets, depending upon how many sub-awards you're planning to have.

It should include -- the budget form. It should include a human subjects narrative. If you are an applicant who is selected for funding, there will be additional forms that you will need to fill out in the future, not at this time.

Okay. I'm going to go through each of these in turn, but I see a couple of questions here I want to answer.

It says, "If there is an error and there is still time, can it be corrected and re-sent?" Yes, and that would be one very good reason to try to get it in early so that you can actually look to see what you have submitted to make sure that everything is there and that it meets the page and formatting requirements that I'm going to go through today.

"If an application is late for the June deadline, can it be submitted for October?" Yes. It certainly can. And that would be the first option I would suggest to someone if they were to call me and went, "Ah, I missed the June deadline. What can I do?" I think the thing is, "Keep working on your proposal and send it in October."

"For resubmission, can appendix A include an additional three pages or is the three-page explanation part of the 15 pages?"

It is the latter answer, so it is part of the 15-pages, so you can use up to three pages of your 15 pages as a narrative response to the reviewers.

All right. So what I'm going to do now is I'm going to walk through each of these sections and talk about some of the formatting requirements that are necessary and that you need to attend to in preparing your application.

I just want to say that these - these requirements are -- they're not movable requirements and if you submit a proposal where you go over…, your font size is incorrect, you're missing components, you run the risk of having that part being either removed from the application or the whole application being considered noncompliant.

So, use your checklist, go through and make sure you include everything.

Slides Thirty-three, Thirty-four, and Thirty-five:

All right. So, let's begin - I didn't include a page on the cover sheet, but what you will notice, where you have three stars there, on the cover sheet, I think the most important piece of information besides how to get in touch with you, the applicant if, indeed, we have additional questions or concerns, is to look at Item 11 of that Standard Form 424 and follow the directions to include your research topic and goal.

So, there are topic and Goal codes that are in the package instructions. You need to include those on Item 11 of Standard Form 424. You need to include this within your one-page abstract, and those things need to match.

This will assure that your proposal goes forward to the correct review committee and is reviewed in relation to the right requirements in the Request for Applications.

So, I'm going to actually stop here because I see two questions here about -- about the -- hang on. Sorry. -- the page limits. Okay. So I have a question here that says, "Are the slides going to be available?" Yes. If you need repeats of the page limits for the narratives I will be going through that step-by-step, so you will get that as we moved through the talk today.

"Is the available funding equally divided between the June and October deadlines?" It is not -- we do not have funding that is associated with either of those deadlines. The funding is only associated with our fiscal 2009 budget.

And then we have another question here, which says, "You would not find out if a June proposal was accepted or denied in time to turn around and resubmit in October."

That is correct. Do not put in in June and think that you will hear back as to whether the proposal is being considered for funding or not by October 2nd. If you

submit in June, it is unlikely you will hear anything prior to January of 2009. You, the applicant.

Slide Thirty-six:
　　　　Okay. So, for the abstract, it is one page, single-spaced. You should adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements that I'm going to discuss when I talk about the project narrative.
　　　　You need to add it as an attachment, a PDF file is preferred on -- and it is number six of the "Other Project Information" form."
　　　　So, this is one of the forms you need to attend to because that is the form where you will upload all of the PDFs required for all of the content pieces of the proposal.

Slides Thirty-seven and Thirty eight:
(Slides of NCER and NCSER topic and Goal codes)

Slide Thirty-nine:
　　　　The project narrative is limited to 25 pages, single-spaced. It will also be added as an attachment, as a separate attachment. It goes up under #7 of the "Other Project Information" form. So, that's where you upload it, under Item number seven.

Slide Forty:
　　　　Within the project narrative there should be four sections for the research proposals, for -- if you're coming in for a center or a training grant, look at which sections are required for those.
　　　　The sections are a little bit different there, but for both the education research grants and the special education research grants, you need to include a section that speaks to the significance of your proposal, a section that describes the research plan that you are proposing to carry out, a section that describes the personnel who will be working on this project, and a section that describes the resources that you have available to ensure that the project goes forward as planned.
　　　　The information for each of these sections is detailed in the Request for Applications in two places, under part 2 for your particular topic that you're planning to submit to, and under part 3, the requirements of the proposed research.
　　　　The Request for Applications that you can find are -- you can find on the ies.ed.gov/funding page of our website.

Slide Forty-one:
　　　　Now, the project narrative, that 25-single-spaced-page document: it does not include any of the following things. These are additional pieces of information that need to be included over and above the project narrative.
　　　　So it does not include the SF 424, those research and related forms, it does not include the one-page abstract, it does not include the appendices, does not include the bibliography or the biographical sketches, any of those things listed here on this particular slide.

Slide Forty-two:

When you're putting together your project narrative, some things to remember. Try to be as concise as you can. Make it clear and easy to read. Please number your pages.

One of the really important things to remember is that reviewers are going to want to be able to refer in their comments to particular pages, and it will help them communicate to the full panel where the information is included in the text.

Again, adhere to the type and font size and format specifications for the entire research narrative, including footnotes.

I have a question here which says, "What is the difference between the personnel section of the narrative and the bio sketches that are separate from the narrative?"

The personnel section should be anywhere between one to two pages of the project narrative and they should include a brief narrative description of what the named personnel will be bringing to this particular research project.

For the bio sketches, those are opportunities for you to provide additional information about the skills and qualifications of the members of your team and what they will be bringing to the project as a whole.

"Do you request a table of contents?" No. The answer is we do not request a table of contents.

Slides Forty-three and Forty-four:

All right. For appendix A, I mentioned this before, appendix A, we have a limit of 15 pages, single-spaced. It should be included at the end of the project narrative and submitted as part of the same narrative PDF attachments.

So, you should have your project narrative. Perhaps you've prepared it originally in a Word document. Immediately following that should be appendix A, and then it will all be uploaded as part of the same PDF attachment.

Again, margin, format and font size requirements that hold for the project narrative also hold for appendix A.

"What can you put in appendix A?" You can put in any figures, charts, or tables that supplement research text. If you're putting in, for example, a development project, perhaps you'll have a table or a chart that describes the theory of change or your developmental theory in terms of your theory of how the pieces of the intervention fit together.

You can include figures, charts and tables from any preliminary data that you're citing. You could include a work plan that's in a tabular format that describes "Here's what we intend to do over the number of years of research that we're requesting."

You can include in appendix A as well, examples of any measures that are to be used in the project. I would include those perhaps in a tabular format, making it very clear that these are examples and that you're not trying to put something of a narrative form into appendix A that really belongs in the project narrative itself.

You can include letters of agreement in appendix A. Those letters of agreement can come from schools and districts who are participating in the project. You can also include letters of agreement from consultants who will be serving on the project.

And again, for resubmissions, you can include up to three pages, or you can use up to three pages of appendix A describing how the revised proposal is responsive to prior reviewer feedback.

We recommend that if you do that, you should indicate the prior application number and I actually think that it can also be every helpful to refer the reviewer back to pages in the new narrative saying, "Here's where you can see the changes that we've made."

"Are reviewers required to read the appendix materials?" They are expected to read the appendix materials. It is considered part of the application.

Slides Forty-five and Forty-six:

In appendix B, you should include, or you can include up to 10 pages, single-spaced, and you can include there information about the curriculum materials, what -- if you're developing something or testing something, say, maybe a scope and sequence of a curriculum you're testing under efficacy, you can include it there in appendix B.

That should be included, again, at the end of appendix A, and as part of that big PDF that you're going to upload that's going to have the project narrative, appendix A, and then appendix B, and that will all be part of the same document and uploaded.

Again, margin, format and font size requirements hold for appendix B as well.

In appendix B you can include curriculum materials, computer screens, test items, and other materials used in the intervention or the assessment proposal that you're putting forward.

You know, it just occurred to me, as I was talking here in terms of the question about are reviewers required to read the appendix materials, I think one of the things that can be very helpful for reviewers is that if you are planning to include tables, figures, charts or any example materials in appendix B, if you would refer your reviewer to that appendix and tell them which page they can find that information, anything you can do to make the reviewer's job more straightforward where they can find the information that you are discussing or describing with little -- with less effort on their part is a good thing to do.

Okay. "What about formatting requirements when we're using screen shots or samples from published materials that do not adhere?"

That is okay. Just make sure that it's just -- use the screen shot or use the published materials, but do make sure that they're legible.

So, one of the things that individuals will sometimes do is they will try to put multiple screen shots on a single page and sometimes then the reviewers can't actually read the text that's on there.

So, please try to make it as legible as you can in terms of including that information.

"In appendix A you talk about examples of measures and in appendix B you talk about test items. What's the difference?"

The difference actually has to do with what kind of a proposal you're putting in. So, appendix B really is the material that you are developing.

So, for example, if you're putting in a proposal to develop an assessment, you want to include perhaps some sample items, some sample materials, anything that you've

done prior to putting in the proposal that provides the reviewers with the sense of what you're going to be developing.

In appendix A, most of the measures that I would see in appendix A, it's usually a table of measures, so maybe you want to include more details about the psychometric properties of the measures you're planning to use, say, in an efficacy proposal. That, you can often include in a table in appendix A, and that will save some time and space in the 25-page project narrative.

If you have any confusions about what I say, or if you have particular questions, I want to encourage you to talk to your program officer --to find that individual's name in the RFA ---and they can walk you through the requirements that are specific for the particular topic and goal to which you are applying.

"Should appendices be numbered consecutive with the narrative?" You know, that's an interesting question and I think -- I actually think it probably makes sense to have pages one to 25 for the narrative and then have A-1 up to 15 for appendix A and B-1 up to 10 for appendix B.

Hang on. Lots of questions are coming up here. "Is appendix B optional? Have you said that today and I missed it?" No, appendix B is optional. It is not required, so I'm sorry if I neglected to say that.

Another question here: "Are we required to consecutively paginate the entire package?" I do not believe there's any requirement to do so, and I think that given what I just said before about using pages one to 25 and then A-1 and B-1, I think it actually would be difficult to do so.

Generally, reviewers are going to want to look at pages in the project narrative or in one of the two appendices. If you want to refer them to information included in the bibliography or, say, the budget pages, you can just refer them to that section and they can locate that.

I'm just pausing to see if there are any other questions that pop up here. All right.

Slide Forty-seven:

For the bibliography and references cited in the text, there is no page limit, so you can put in a lot of bibliographies and references if you so choose. That should be added as a separate PDF file. That is not considered to be part of the project narrative, appendix A and appendix B section.

It should be uploaded as item number eight of the "Other Project Information" form. Again, margin, format, and font size. Please include complete citations.

So, one of the difficulties is that different organizations have different requirements and expectations in terms of the information included in citations.

In general, if you want to use APA formatting, it's not required, but that is a format that's relatively straightforward. But make sure you include enough information so that an individual, a reviewer who would like to find out, who would like to go to something you've referred, so they can actually find it and locate it.

We have a question here that says, "What does the output of the grant application look like to IES staff and reviewers after a grant is submitted? Is it one concatenated file or is it separated files, and does color show on screen?"

It is concatenated, so we get a single file that includes the budget sheet and then, in order, all the information that I've described here, so it starts with the abstract and it

goes all the way through all the forms that we're going to talk about today, and in the order that I've just discussed.

And "Does color show on screen?" It does, however, the color will not show up when it's printed. So, some reviewers still prefer to use printed files when they review, so I would make sure that whatever you include, that information comes through whether it is black and white or color.

So, for example, tables, graphs, charts, don't rely on color to carry a huge amount of information. All right. I'm going to keep pressing on here.

So far we have a cover sheet. We have an abstract, we have a project narrative, we have an appendix A and an appendix B if so desired, and then we have the bibliography and references cited.

Slide Forty-eight:

The next section, also uploaded under #8 of the "Other Project Information" form are the biographical sketches of the key personnel. Please note that these should be short CVs, so each biographical sketch is limited to a total of five pages.

I've put there "four plus one," because essentially it's a four-page CV that would include the current affiliation of the person, their educational background, their relevant publications, relevant presentations, any other form of experience that speaks to their ability to participate on the project.

And then the fifth page is limited to a list of the current and pending grants for that particular individual with their percentage or proportion of time allocated to each project, whether current or pending included on that fifth page.

That's an important piece of information for us to have as we are trying to make sure that people are not overallocated in terms of their time. I know universities are worried about that. So are we at the federal level.

Again, these should be uploaded as attachments. As you'll notice on here, if you have more than eight sketches you should submit them at Item 11 of the "Other Project Information" form. Again, margin, format, font size requirements.

I have a question here that says, "Should the NIH (National Institutes of Health) bio sketch format be used?" That is certainly a format that can be used. We do not require it, but it works and it includes the information that reviewers are expecting to find.

"Do pending grants include the proposal being submitted?" You know, that's actually an interesting question. I think it can or -- it can include that, but it does not need to include that. It's mostly important that we know about pending grants or current grants that we are not aware of.

"Does 'current and pending grants' include all grants and all roles, e.g., staff members for someone else's grants?" Yes. The concern here, what we're trying to account for, is that you cannot request funding to support more than 100 percent of your time.

So, if a percentage of your time is being paid on someone else's grant, say you're a co-PI or maybe you're a statistical member of another grant, you need to include that information on your current and pending bio sketch.

I'm just pausing here, making sure I've answered everything. All right.

Slide Forty-nine:

Under the narrative budget justification, again, there are no page limits for this particular part of the proposal. It should also be added as an attachment under Section K of the Budget Total Federal and Nonfederal Form.

You'll need to adhere to margin, format, and font size requirements. It should be a single document and you should be sure to include budget justifications for each year of the entire project. So, please do not include only the budget justification for year one of the project.

I have another question about pending grants here that I should address before I move on. It says, "By pending grants do you mean grants that have been awarded but they have not yet begun, or do you mean grants that we have submitted elsewhere and are still waiting to hear about?"

Both. So, please include information about both of those types of pending awards, or pending grants.

Slide Fifty:

When you're preparing your narrative budget justification you should make sure to provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers, as well as program staff here at the Institute, to judge whether the costs you are requesting are reasonable, given the work you are proposing to do.

It is extremely helpful if you correspond the budget justification categories to the itemized breakdown of project costs. So, when you go in and begin to fill in the budget sheet, you will notice that there are categories, sort of overall categories, like personnel and fringe, and if you could make sure that your budget justification follows those categories in order, it makes it much easier for reviewers to make sure that there are explanations for each of the costs requested in the budget itself.

You are also expected to include your planned time commitments and descriptions of the responsibilities for the principal investigator and any other key personnel who are participating in the project.

And then, please make sure to include details about sub-awards if that is, in fact, applicable.

There's a question here that says, "Are there any restrictions on charging indirect on participant support costs?" I'm not sure exactly I know what that question is referring to, but here's what I will let you know.

For IES grants, these are research grants, except for the training grant, which has a different set of requirements, but for all of our research grants, you are bound by the indirect agreement that your institution has with the federal government.

So, you may request your full indirect, your full research indirect costs, presuming that the work you're completing is occurring on campus and the degree to which indirect is charged on participants' support costs, that that varies across institutions.

So, for example, I know that tuition for a graduate research assistants is often not subject to indirect costs, but that is determined through your indirect cost agreement.

"For project/performance site locations, do we include only sites for which we have written agreements?" I think it depends upon -- this is a level of detail you probably

want to talk to your program officer about, but I certainly would not include sites for which you do not have written agreements.

Sometimes people interpret the site location information to be places where you have a sub-award as opposed to places where you are going to carry out the research. Either is permissible.

"Will a budget justification make or break an award or is it considered after scoring for an award?"

The budget justification is considered after scoring for an award. However, I think that reviewers do consider the entire package and if there is a budget justification that clearly explains how the money will be spent, that is considered to be positive.

It also makes the Institute's job more straightforward when we get funding recommendations back to our place, to our office, then we can actually make determinations as to whether the costs are justifiable.

"Time and commitments and descriptions of responsibilities, is that just with regard to this grant or overall?"

That is the -- the narrative budget justification should include a discussion of the time commitments and descriptions of responsibilities with regard to this particular grant proposal that you are putting in.

"Some universities prefer to generate separate budget justifications for each sub-award. Do these have to be integrated into one merged budget justification document or can they be included sequentially?"

Most of the proposals that I've seen have it included sequentially, because the sub-awards -- there is a separate spreadsheet that you complete for sub-awards and then you would follow that by a separate narrative budget justification.

"Should the budget justification be divided according to year, year one each category, year two each category, year three, or is it okay if each category describes the costs for all years of the project?"

I prefer, personally, to have it broken out by year, so if I can have a budget justification that says "In this year, here's how we're planning to spend dollars."

And I will tell you that when I have to do budget review when I get recommended proposals back to me, I will often ask applicants to clarify and break out by year how expenses are going to be distributed, because activities vary from year to year.

"Can we request tuition remission for graduate students, then? It is sometimes difficult to determine if agencies allow tuition."

We allow tuition, so long as it is something that your university also allows you to do.

"For some projects, written agreements may be dependent upon funding. If that is the case, can a letter of support suffice?"

I assume that you mean a letter of support from an institution where you're planning to work from a school site, and yes, then a letter of support is sufficient."

Slide Fifty-one:
I'm going to press on, because I'm looking at our time here and I want to make sure we get through all the slides, but I will pause again and look at more questions soon.

So, here we go. We were asking about indirect cost rate, and here's the next slide. So, use your institution's federal indirect cost rate, and then please do use the off-campus indirect cost rate when it is appropriate to do so.

Another thing that we request in our narrative budget justification is an explanation if less than 75 percent of the total indirect costs are based on application of the off-campus rate. You need to justify and explain why.

The indirect cost rate agreement, your institution's indirect cost rate agreement must be in place at the time of the award to claim indirect costs, and do know, there is a procedure where you can establish a temporary indirect cost rate if you do not have one in place.

Slides Fifty-two and Fifty-three:
In terms of some of the questions we had earlier about sub-awards. There is a link there to the Excel spreadsheet where you can get, for the sub-awards, that you can use for the sub-awards.

Again, when I pulled up that original page, the ies.ed.gov/funding, you will note that one of the green lines includes a sub-award, and that information is included there.

The sub-award budget should be uploaded as Item 11 of the "Other Project Information" form. Again, please submit an itemized budget spreadsheet for each sub-award and include details in the narrative budget justification.

Separate budgets are required only for sub-awarding or collaborating organizations that perform a substantial portion of the project.

So, if you have someone who's going to work with you only in a consulting fashion, you don't need to include a full budget for that individual.

I have a question here: "What is the recommended level of detail suggested for budget justifications? Recently we've noticed an increased detailed level of scrutiny, particularly regarding nonpersonnel costs."

I think you should include as much detail that makes it clear how the federal dollars are being spent. There is a concern with how federal dollars are being spent, so to the degree that you can specify that, that is an important thing to do.

I don't know if that answers your question, but I think more is better in this case.

Slide Fifty-four:
Okay. You are also expected to include a human subject's narrative. Again, this is something that doesn't have a page limit. You are not required to already have acquired IRB approval; however, you do need to have this human subjects narrative uploaded as part of your application.

This information is uploaded in Item 11 of the "Other Project Information" form.

For any researcher who is planning to do research activities with human subjects, you need to complete this narrative. I think this applies to nearly everyone who applies to the Institute of Education Sciences. The only case when it might not apply would be if you're doing purely secondary data analysis.

Slide Fifty-five:
If you believe that your research is exempt, you still need to submit an exempt research narrative under the human subjects category.

If you believe you're exempt, there are six possible exemptions that are listed in the application package instructions; however, you should not, in your human subjects narrative, just say "exempt." You should provide an explanation as to why you believe that you qualify or your research project would qualify for exemption.

That's important because if you get recommended for funding, then there will be an IRB, a human subjects review of your proposal, which will occur here at the Department and we need to have sufficient information to complete that review.

Slide Fifty-six:

For most of you, you will need to include a nonexempt human subjects narrative. In that you will include the information that you would include when you're putting together your IRB package for your institution.

So, you need to detail the human subjects' involvement and the characteristics of the participants. You need to include: Where is the material going to come from? Are you going to interview these children? Are they going to take tests? What are you going to do? How do you plan to recruit individuals to participate in the research? What process of informed consent will you be using?

Identify any potential risks and what protections you plan to take to make sure that those risks are not harmful. You should describe the importance of the knowledge to be gained from this research, and you need to make sure you include other collaborating sites where this human subjects narrative may need to be extended to.

Regarding human subjects review criteria, here's a question: "If IES standards differ from OHRP rules and policies, which prevail and is enforced?"

I believe that IES is not going to supersede OHRP rules and policies. Know that if you are recommended, there will be a conversation between the IES or actually the Department of Education's Human Subjects Office and your institution's office.

"Is there a page limit on human subjects narrative?" No, there is no page limit.

Slides Fifty-seven and Fifty-eight:

Okay. I've been talking a lot about format requirements. Here -- for those of you who haven't read all those details, here we go.

For the abstract, the project narrative, appendix A, appendix B, the bibliography and references cited, the biographical sketches and narrative budget justification.

A page is considered an eight-and-a-half-inch, by 11-inch page. We expect the material to be on one side only, and you need to have one-inch margins all the way around, top, bottom and on both sides.

Slide Fifty-nine:

We have type size and font size requirements, which shouldn't surprise anyone. The rules are: The height of the letters must not be smaller than 12 points. The type density, including characters and spaces must be no more than 15 characters per inch and there can be no more than six lines of type within a vertical inch.

Return to Slide Fifty-six:

I have a question here that says: "What do you mean include collaborating sites?" So, that's going back to this question here on the human subjects narrative, nonexempt.

Yes, you need to list the collaborating sites wherever additional research will be done so that we'll know to what degree we need to pursue or make sure we have human subjects approval from those institutions.

Generally, if you're putting in a research project that involves data collection at multiple sites, those will be the collaborating sites.

"Where would we include a discussion of human subjects participants site/ incentives, in the human subjects narrative or the budget justification?"

I generally see that in the budget justification, but if you know that your university has particular rules about that, and wants to see it in the human subjects narrative, you should feel free to include it there as well.

Return to Slide Fifty-nine:

"What size must footnotes be?" Here, I think -- I thought I said that already, but the footnotes should be the same size, I believe, as the narrative itself.

I've lost my place. "What font is ideal?" You know, I think that that's an interesting question and I don't -- we don't have a standard ideal font. I think we talk about Times New Roman as one possible font, but I know some individuals prefer Arial or Helvetica, so I think that you should choose whichever font makes sense.

Think about ease of reading. You want to think about the fact that your reviewers are going to be reading 10 to 15 of these applications all at once. Most of these applications end up being nearly a hundred pages long. So, to whatever degree you can make the font easy to read, I think that helps the reviewers.

Page number placement: I believe it's upper right, is the best place, and the reason I'm thinking that is because I know that an application number will be stamped on all of the documents that you upload, and I believe that goes along the bottom.

"Is the project narrative the only component of the project package that gets scored for points?"

The entire proposal is going to be scored and each of the documents that I've discussed so far is going to contribute to the scoring. So, for example, when we talk about the piece of the project narrative, we talk about, say, the research plan, for example.

There may very well be information included in appendix A in the form of tables and figures, or in appendix B in terms of the curriculum materials that you're planning to develop that the reviewers will use to support their evaluation of the quality of the research plan that's being put forward.

Certainly, when reviewers are scoring the personnel section, they are going to use the information that's included in the narrative, but they are also going to read carefully all of the biographical sketches.

They're going to look for letters of agreement from consultants that could have been included in appendix A and similarly for resources when they're trying to evaluate whether there are adequate resources for the project, they will, again, look at CVs. They will look at the narrative budget justification to say have you put in enough money or enough graduate research assistants, to make sure that all the data is collected.

So, I think it's important to think of the entire proposal, the whole application, as a package that the reviewers will be looking at in toto.

"Is the page number inside the one-inch margin or outside?" The page number can be outside the one-inch margin.

I have a question here that says, "Do we know the total possible point value of each section?" We don't score on a rubric in the way that many individuals or many types of grant proposals do.

Reviewers are asked to score the significance, research plan, personnel, and narrative(resources) and then they are asked to provide an overall score that reflects the overall quality of the proposed plan of research.

Slide Sixty:

All right. I'm going to keep going here. It's already 3:06. I think we have only 20 more minutes. I want to make sure we at least look at each of these slides.

Notice that -- for the spacing, okay, so we talked about type size and font size for spacing. We expect that the text will be single-spaced in the research narrative -- I mean, in the project narrative section.

Slide Sixty-one:

For graphs, diagrams, and tables, I think this refers to an earlier question that we had about the access to color. We request that only black and white is used in graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts.

Again, this is because when the information is printed and given to reviewers it is not printed in color.

You should conform to the same type size requirements to the degree possible. In the context of figures, charts, tables, and figure legends, they may be smaller in size, but they must be readily legible.

Again, I think I just want to remind everyone: your goal here is to make the information as accessible as possible to your reviewers. Small type size, particularly for those of us who are getting older, it's harder to read. So, just keep that in mind when you're preparing the document, or documents.

Slide Sixty-two:

Okay. So, here's a summary of our page limits. The project summary or abstract is one single-spaced page. The project narrative can be no longer than 25 single-spaced pages.

Appendix A is 15 pages. Appendix B, which is optional, can include up to 10 pages. And each biographical sketch is limited to five single-spaced pages. Four pages of a CV, of a short CV, plus one page that describes current and pending support.

Slides Sixty-three and Sixty-four:

Oh, I guess I thought I had more to go, but here we go. Final reminders. There is an application checklist that is provided in the application package instructions.

So, when you go to grants.gov and you download the application, you will also download those instructions. There is a checklist there. Please use the checklist. That will help you make sure that you've uploaded and included all the information that is requested and that you haven't overlooked something because you've been working so hard on getting this together.

Make sure you provide all the required information for each of the forms that you need to fill out, so that's the Standard Form 424, the cover sheet, and the

Budget Form.

The certifications and assurances need to be completed only if you're recommended for funding, and you will attach each of these application pieces as PDF files.

Slide Sixty-five:

Again, make sure that -- oh, the other thing you make sure you do is make sure that you attach the files to the proper form. So, I was giving you different forms where information needs to be uploaded.

You want to make sure that you've uploaded the PDFs into the right location. If you put them in the wrong form, then there's no guarantee that that information will then get translated or downloaded correctly into our website where we get access to the file.

There is a check package for errors button on the grant application package. Make sure you use it. Again, another reason for doing things early, so that you have time to go back, if there are any errors that are identified, and to correct those errors prior to pushing that final submit button.

Again, you need to upload and have validated by grants.gov a fully completed application before 4:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on the deadline date. Okay. So, you want to push that submit button and get that e-mailed back from grants.gov, saying we got it.

Slide Sixty-six:

All right. Here, we have some questions here. I have a thing that says, "I did not receive a PowerPoint by e-mail as I did for the other webinars. Where can I download it?"

I believe that we will make sure that it will be sent to you. We have your e-mail address. The PowerPoints are not yet up on our website, although they will be soon. So, they'll be on the ies.ed.gov website within the next several weeks.

Another question here: "Is IES contemplating limiting the number of times that a proposal can be resubmitted as NIH does?" Not as far as I know, but things can always change.

Then I have here: "No GEPA statement." I don't think we ask for one. I was -- yes, I was looking. I don't believe so.

Okay. Final reminders here: Register early. Do it now if you're planning to put in a submission. Review the application package instructions for information on filling out the forms and uploading the applications. Read them carefully.

Download the application package that's designated for your competition and deadline. Please double-check the competition title, the CFDA number and the deadline and make sure that you have downloaded the correct package.

Submit your application early, a day or two in advance or even earlier, if possible. And then verify that the submission is okay.

Slide Sixty-seven:

All right. And here are the two websites that I've been talking mostly about today.

I have a question: "Will all the webinar questions and their answers be supplied to everyone?" I believe that what we're doing is we're tape-recording the presentation, and so the questions that I have answered will be included in those recordings.

Oh, we're also working on preparing a frequently asked questions document that we will plan to put up on the website as well.

And I believe that this sort of information for those of you who have been participating in the webinars, we have your e-mails and we will be more than happy to let you know when that information is available.

This is another good reason to sign up for the NewsFlash, because this would be something that we would send a NewsFlash out to anyone on our NewsFlash and say, "Here, there's information about the grant application process and other sorts of technical questions you might have, and you can get access to them on our web as of now."

I have a question here: "Is there any advantage to submitting a proposal in June rather than in October?" I don't believe so. We have standing review panels, so the panels are generally the same or pretty close, right, overlapping in terms of their membership, so I don't think there's any difference between the two.

"Do individuals or institutions register for grants.gov?" I believe, in general, it is institutions who register, although I do not believe there are any restrictions preventing individuals from registering.

All right. We have -- I think it looks like we have about another 15 minutes, so does anyone -- if anyone has any other questions that I didn't cover, or things you'd like me to address, please go ahead and send in a chat e-mail and I will read my screen.

We have a question: "Can you find out who is on the standing review panel?" There is information on our website about the standing review panels. We have a list of who our current reviewers are. I do not believe that information is broken out by panel.

To get to it, you need to go to the Director's page on IES, and then you'll want to go to the Office of Standards and Review, and that information is included there.

If you can't find it, you can certainly send me an e-mail -- oh, I haven't given my e-mail out, and I can direct you to it. So, if anyone has questions that they'd like to send to me and I can either answer them or forward them to the appropriate program staff, my e-mail is elizabeth -- it's e-l-i-z-a-b-e-t-h -- .albro, a-l-b-r-o -- @ed.gov (mailto:Elizabeth.albro@ed.gov).

All right. And you can find me. An e-mail is good. That's the best way for me to get answers to you in a timely fashion. Oh. Here, I see it's all there.

Okay. Anyone thinking of any questions? I can't believe there are no more questions out there. Oh, here we go.

"Should one submit the same proposal to both June and October competitions or is that not allowed?"

That is not allowed, so you cannot submit the same proposal to both the June and the October competitions. The reasons -- there are two reasons for this.

One is that this is the same fiscal year, so this is coming out of the same dollars. And it's the same -- the same review panel is reviewing both the June and the October applications.

So, you can only submit one application -- you can only submit one proposal to either June or October.

Now, individual institutions and individual principal investigators can certainly put in more than one proposal, but they need to be different proposals. They can't be proposals to complete the same work.

A question: "Do I anticipate these webinars being reoffered for the October deadline?" I think that's the current plan. We don't have any dates yet, but we will certainly let individuals know once we know for sure.

A question here: "How early or often can we contact the program officer?" You can contact a program officer as early as you want. I've been here at the Institute for nearly six years now, and I have had conversations with individuals over several years.

Sometimes folks think they're ready to submit, and it turns out they're not. So, feel free to contact any one of us as soon as you're ready. And in terms of how often, I think that depends upon the individual program officer. So they'll let you how much time they have available to work with you.

"If you are successful to this process, when would the funding be available?" If you apply in June -- so if you've put in a proposal for the June 26th deadline, the earliest possible start date would be March 1st, 2009.

If you put in a proposal for October 2nd, the earliest possible start date is July 1st, 2009. For either June or October deadlines, the latest possible start date that you could request would be September 15th, 2009.

So, the funding has to be the money, the obligation, the awards have to be made in the fiscal 2009 year.

A general question -- oh, wait. I'll come back to that in a second. "Do you plan the same schedule in 2009 for submission deadlines, June and October?"

You know, it's a little hard for me to say at this point, but I do believe that we are intending to have a June and October deadline for -- it would be the fiscal 2010 competition.

I have a general question here that says: "A proposal with a faculty member on the team has higher chances of getting selected than a team with no faculty member; is this true?"

This is a question. I don't know whether "faculty member" is the critical dimension here. The critical dimension is really a member of the team who has documented research experience.

So, we actually make awards to research institutions that are not universities, where folks are not faculty members. So, the real critical characteristic of, say, a principal investigator for the team would be someone who has the demonstrated capacity to carry out the type of research that you're proposing to do.

I have a question: "Is it possible to go to the Department to look at funded proposals?" We do have a Freedom of Information Act room where you can look at some old funded proposals, but I would not recommend that as a first place to start.

If you're trying to get ideas about the kind of work that we have funded in the past or recently, I would go to our websites, so you can go to either ncer.ed.gov or ncser.ed.gov and go to our Projects and Programs page on either of those sites.

There you can look at abstracts of all of the work that we funded since our inception, and that will give you a good sense of the range of work that we have supported.

I think the next step then is to really work with your program officer and they can provide you with lots of feedback.

One of the difficulties in looking at earlier funded proposals is that the requirements do change from year to year, and so I don't recommend that applicants rely too much on prior funded work because that can lead you down the wrong path. You really need to look at the Request for Applications to make sure you're responding to the requirements in the current RFA.

Another general question: "If I've been having problems downloading application materials from the website, should I contact the support desk?" Yes. Please do contact the support desk. I fear that I and any of our program staff here at IES can't really help you. We don't have the technical expertise to help you with any of those sorts of challenges.

So, please contact the support desk at grants.gov and I know that they'll be glad to work with you and try to help figure out why it's not working.

"What is the link again where we can see awarded abstracts?" If you just go to the general ies.ed.gov website, so if you see on the screen right now, I have the ies.ed.gov site -- you don't have to put in "funding" -- you can click on either of our Center pages, and it's very evident there.

And then when you get to that page there's a blue bar that goes across the top, and I believe it's the second from the left. It says Projects and Programs.

If you click there, that will take you to all of the abstracts.

The other thing -- I guess the other thing I wanted to mention is, if you go to the funding page I believe that you can also get to the project selector from that page, and you can look there, and that will also take you to the funded abstracts.

"What is the approximate response time of a program officer? Sometimes if we don't hear from a program officer for a week, we're unsure when it's appropriate to re-send an e-mail or call again."

I think the answer to that question really depends, so -- for example, if any of you tried to e-mail us today, we had a small fire in the basement of our building, and the server was on the fritz, so nobody could get in touch with you and there would be no way for us to be in touch with you.

People also travel. I think that when you sort of send out your initial contact to a program officer, you can ask how long -- how long do you think it'll take, right, to get back.

I guess I want to say that, for me, I try to be good, but sometimes I'm traveling and I'm out of the office and I don't reply immediately.

But, I think if you haven't heard within a week or so, and you're not aware if that person is traveling, it's more than fine to send an e-mail saying, "Hey, I sent you this e-mail last week. I wonder if you've gotten it or if you have an answer."

"Is it okay to send a program officer a one-page summary of the question and the plan to address it for feedback regarding how promising the topic is before investing the time in a full-blown proposal that is not interesting enough to IES?"

Absolutely. And I think that I would recommend that for those of you who did not submit letters of intent or have not done so yet, please do send in a one-page summary. Program officers are here to provide as much or as little assistance as you want.

We're all doctoral-level staff here. We can provide you with feedback. We can review early outlines. We can even review drafts if we have sufficient time to do so.

All right. I'm pausing. We have five more minutes on the conference line. Does anyone else have one?

Oh, my e-mail address has gone out to everyone again, if you didn't get it the first time.

All right. Well, if you all don't have any additional questions, I think I'm going to go ahead and sign off and I certainly encourage you all to e-mail me or to e-mail the program officer that you have identified as the right one, and do that.

Oops. I have another question here that just came in. It says, "If you sent the letter of intent for June and decide not to submit a grant until October, can you use the same letter for October?" Yes, you can.

All right. Any other last questions?

Well, I want to thank all of you for taking this time out of your afternoon to listen and please do be in touch, and if there's anything we can do to be of assistance, please let us know.

All right. Thanks again. Have a great afternoon.

(Whereupon, the application process session was concluded.)